Ford's protectors unruffled

WASHINGTON (AP) — The President's protectors displayed unruffled confidence in their security procedures Thursday, even though a man about whom they had been warned crashed through a traffic gate with his auto and drove to the doorstep of the White House.

Earl L. Drescher, head of the Executive Protective Service which mans the White House gates, said he was certain a study group would be formed to give the incident quick attention.

But neither Drescher, the Secret Service, nor Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, the Cabinet head responsible for the Secret Service, was involved in any formal meetings Thursday to analyze the situation, aides said.

"We're constantly re-evaluating and making changes where we see need," Drescher said. He indicated no changes can be expected this week.

President Ford and his family are in the midst of a skiing vacation in Colorado.

The incident occurred despite the fact that the Secret Service had classified the driver, Marshall H. Fields of surburban Silver Spring, Md., as "of possible protective interest."

The service would not say how Fields came to their attention, but he had written letters to various news media threatening some sort of action against the government on Christmas Day.

Fields was not under active surveillance when he crashed through a gate with his auto, according to the Secret Service.

Fields threatened security guards with packages of what he called explosives. After four hours of negotiations with officials, he surrendered. The packages turned out to contain highway flares.

On Thursday, Fields underwent his first day of in-depth psychological interviews, said a spokesman for St. Elizabeth's Hospital, the federal mental institution where Fields was taken as a "White House case."

The White House grounds are surrounded by an eight-foothigh cast iron fence with spearshaped bars about as thick as a man's thumb. The fence is set in stone. Six gates provide access to the grounds.

Fields crashed through the northwest gate fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue — one of two gates that are electronically operated. It is guarded from an adjacent guard booth.

Fields' move apparently was so sudden that Secret Service officials were unable to say from which direction Fields approached or how fast his car was traveling.

Despite the fact that it was Chri morning, the incident occurred wh gate guards were at full streng Secret Service spokesman declir say how many guards were at the g

A 1968 law permits the Secret S to commit "White House cases" Elizabeth's Hospital for up to days. In a 1971 survey, The Asso Press found that such commit were running at the rate of about year.